

The Buckeye Backcheck

Newsletter of the Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

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Chapter Meeting Minutes September 8, 2020

The meeting was hosted online by Kim Hoessly

Attendance:

Kim Hoessly, Chris Burget, Ron Kenreich, David Stang, Walter Bagnall, Mitch Staples, Gale Staples, Mark Ritchie, Evan Binham, and new members Andrew Kovalski, and Charles Marino

Treasurer's Report:

\$1,939.66

Old Business:

Acknowledgement of Ben Wiant's passing was posted in the "In Memoriam" section of the April 2020 issue of the PTG Journal.

Chapter elections are overdue, and this past Spring David Chadwick asked if there were any volunteers or nominees who would like to be considered for Chapter leadership roles. Chris Burget also announced that he is stepping down from his position as Secretary and possibly Newsletter Editor, but can still maintain and update the website for the time being.

New Business:

Solich Piano has offered their store as a location for future meetings, if desired. In-person parking lot meetings were also offered as a possibility, though colder weather may be a factor. Several members said they would prefer to continue online meetings, for the time being. It was also suggested that members try to think of topics or demonstrations that could be easily streamed.

Butts & Flanges

Kim Hoessly recently had a customer who was hearing a buzzing sound in a bass string. However, Kim simply could not hear what he was describing. She thinks that it may be some partial that the person noticed and couldn't seem to "unhear" it. He is in his thirties and does not use hearing aids. He described it as a sort of buzz, but Kim did not detect the usual suspects that typically cause buzzing sounds. She said the string was a single-wound bichord that was previously replaced by another tech, and that the sound reportedly existed before the change. He also stated that the string had already been twisted once before. It was suggested that it possibly might need another twist, but Kim didn't hear anything that sounded like a loose winding. Longitudinal modes of vibration, similar to a louder and distinct partial, can also linger even after a string has been changed, because it is related to the scaling of the string itself. Some dimension of the string usually needs to be altered slightly to eliminate the problem. Other possibilities suggested were rib separation, loose bridge pin, vibrations against the damper wire, and possibly some pre-existing agraffe issues that have been made worse by the new string further deforming its hole. Walter Bagnall also suggested that hammer to string mating issues could also be a culprit. Kim did say that after a little needling and voicing work, the customer did note some improvement, which further leads her to believe that it was partial related in some way. This led to a rather lengthy discussion of other noisy string and termination issues in general in various kinds of pianos, like the Baldwin grand in the cover photo. Kim also related a story of a Dr. Hong (?) who taught some PTG convention classes in the past where he banged a mallet on several human skulls, each sounding a slightly different tone and pitch. This resonance may also influence the inner ear and how individuals can perceive the same sounds differently from one another.

Evan Bingham mentioned, much to our collective chagrin, that he has noticed some newer Young Chang grands that are having action bracket problems once again, though possibly of a different nature than the expanding ones of the past. It appears that the brackets in the center sections may have issues where wood shims need to be glued underneath them and new screw holes drilled into the keyframe. If this is the case, then there will probably be more to come on all of that. Hopefully, Young Chang has recognized the issue and it's only a limited number of pianos.

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Roundtable:

Piano Service Safety Protocols During COVID-19 Pandemic

Thanks to Kim Hoessly for offering to host the September virtual meeting on her own Zoom account. The technical was basically a roundtable discussion on how various technicians are practicing various pandemic related safety procedures while servicing pianos in homes and institutions. Here is a general description of some of the practices our members are utilizing.

It seems that most technicians are following the safety protocols listed on the main PTG website, which were also printed in the March 2020 issue of the newsletter. Cleaning the keys is a given. Some techs are using 70/30 isopropyl alcohol to wipe down keys; some are using a hydrogen peroxide, water, dish soap mix; and a few were using Lysol wipes. There may not be any single solution that is universally harmless on all piano case finishes, though hydrogen peroxide mixes seem to be the least damaging. Steinway recommends hydrogen peroxide for their pianos. Denison University has provided Oxivir TB to its facilities. It is a medical-grade accelerated hydrogen peroxide (AHP) solution that seems to be fairly benign on all finishes tested. Whichever disinfectant chosen, try testing on an inconspicuous part of the piano if you want to know how it will react with the finish. Alcohol can break down lacquer finishes. Most of us stated that we generally try not to get any on the finish to begin with. Bleach and citrus based cleansers are generally not recommended. Some have been using Corey Key Brite, or a mild dish soap mix, to clean the keys first, then follow with a disinfectant. Many disinfectants need to sit for 20 to 60 seconds disinfectants to be effective. This amount of dampness on the keys goes against traditional common practice of not letting the keys get too wet, but this may be a regrettable necessity in some scenarios for the time being.

Mask wearing was also discussed. Some stated that they kept masks on even when customers gave permission to remove them. A few people also use clear plastic face shields. Most universities mentioned require mask use while inside their facilities. Some may allow people working alone to remove them when no one else was in the room, but most require their use when tuning and playing pianos since people are basically breathing all over the keys.

Some stated that they had started out using gloves while servicing, but have since gone on to just frequently cleaning their hands while working, and being mindful of what they touch. Packing paper placed on the floor can also be a place to set tools and cases while working, then disposed of on premises. Wiping down all tools used is another consideration. The fomite transition (object-to-object) of this coronavirus may still pose some risk, but may not be quite as dangerous as previously thought. Some may think the last couple of suggestions may be overkill. Scientific understanding of the virus is still evolving, and some said that they would rather overdo it, than not do enough.

Payments were also briefly discussed. Some said they leave invoices on pianos. Online credit and contactless payment options are also likely to become more popular. More and more customers have been asking about these options in the last few years, and now it is even more so. There are many options out there like Square Reader, Venmo, PayPal, and others. Some have fees that vary from roughly 3-7%, depending on several factors and method of entry.

Institutional, church, and school requirements and practices were also discussed. Most commentators said they follow similar protocols as they do in homes, with a few exceptions here and there depending on how populated the facilities are and what each location requires. There is some variation in what some churches require. A few schools are allowing choirs to practice in larger spaces or outdoor tents while wearing masks, while other programs have halted those activities. Some are utilizing masks that resemble duck bills, and a few vocal teachers have been provided masks with clear plastic windows that allow them to see how their students are articulating while singing. Brass and woodwind players are also using special filter bags that fit over the ends of their instruments, or bags that entirely cover the instrument and resemble vacuum cleaner bags. Some schools are only allowing smaller ensembles and one-on-one instruction. A few require practice rooms to stay empty for a period of time in between uses, and/or have rules for reserving them that can also aid in contact tracing, if needed. Some facilities request that people regularly check their temperatures. Most, if not all, recitals are virtual ones streamed online in empty, or nearly empty, halls. Maximum occupancy limits in all university rooms are also common. It appears that foot traffic, in general, in many of these places is much lower too. Most of the university techs said they tried to complete as much work as they could well in advance of students and faculty returning to school.

Some conclusions from all of this were offered. Basically, the primary consideration is that as long as people are not breathing on top of each other unmasked in close proximity, and good key and hand cleaning practices are observed, they're probably going to be fine. It was also suggested that some of these practices may be here to stay, for at least while, beyond this pandemic.

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Richard C. Lopez **February 28, 1949 - July 21, 2020**

Many technicians in the area have tuned for, and known personally for many years, Richard Lopez, pianist extraordinaire. He played music for several of our post-holiday dinners, most notably at The Worthington Inn. In addition to being a talented pianist, he was also an avid painter and photographer. Those who knew him found him to be a very likeable fellow, and a consummate gentleman who exhibited a low-key, and totally authentic, "coolness" about him. He will be missed by many. Following is a reprint of his obituary, which can also be found at: <https://www.schoedinger.com/obituaries/Richard-Lopez-13/#/> Obituary



Richard C Lopez passed peacefully at his home on Tuesday July 21, 2020.

Born in Hollywood, CA, of English and Honduran parentage, he spent his early years traveling between England, Central America and the United States. His family eventually settled in Columbus, OH where he completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at The Ohio State University, studying piano with Richard Tetley-Kardos. He moved to New York City, studying with Edith Oppens and Karl Ulrich Schnabel and teaching at two of Manhattan's Upper West Side music schools, the Bloomingdale House of Music and the Metropolitan Music School. He returned to Columbus to complete his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree, again at OSU, studying with internationally-known pianist Earl Wild. On his return, he established himself as a jazz and classical pianist and teacher in the Central Ohio area, and was a popular performer all over Columbus, especially at the Short North restaurant Rigsby's. He took a sabbatical year in 2004 to live in Los Angeles where he performed at the Bel-Air Country Club and the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills.

He retired in May 2020 from Otterbein and Denison Universities where he had served as a long-time member of the piano faculties. Richard also taught at the University of Akron, The Ohio State University and Capital University. He was a kind, yet demanding teacher, universally loved by his students and fellow faculty members. He always sought to deepen his understanding and interpretation of music and he remained passionate about learning and teaching until the end of his life.

Richard was a superb performer, remarkable for his sensitivity and versatility. He presented numerous solo recitals of classical repertoire throughout his career. He also appeared as a soloist with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and Columbus Jazz Orchestra, the Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, and the Westerville Symphony among others. His classical playing was characterized by his warm musicianship and exquisite variety of touch.

An imaginative and exciting jazz performer, Richard was Musical Director of the popular "Jazz Masters Series" at the Columbus Museum of Art, where he produced monthly concerts which featured Columbus's finest jazz players in theme-based and jazz all-star showcase concerts. Richard produced two CD's: "The Richard Lopez Trio: Live at Rigsby's", and "Too Far North", featuring his original compositions for jazz quartet. He appeared regularly on music festivals, including the Columbus Arts Festival, the Festival Latino, and the Columbus Jazz and Ribfest. He also composed soundtracks for a variety of commercial, educational, corporate and children's video projects. His original composition, "Blues and Variations" for piano, was commissioned for Capital University's "Grand Piano Series," where it received its premiere. He composed and performed an original score for a major exhibition at the Columbus Cultural Arts Center "The Sight of Music", which explored the intersection and interaction of the aural and visual arts. He was an appropriate choice for this project, since those who were acquainted with him outside of the music community knew him as a talented visual artist who painted locally, in Italy, and in favorite vacation spots Taos, NM and Sanibel, FL. His art is represented on his website: <http://www.richardlopezart.com>. He was an outdoor enthusiast who cycled and hiked thousands of miles in his lifetime, especially during summers in Taos NM. He was predeceased by his dear mother, Leila Lopez, and leaves behind his partner of 45 years Steve Dornbusch, his father Virgilio Lopez, his sisters Jane Lopez, Chris Lopez and Ruth Lopez Brown (Bryan), nephews Chris Holbrook (Alex) and Drew Cook (Kana), and niece Sarah Holbrook. He will be sadly missed by his family, friends, students, fellow musicians, and all those who heard him play, but his legacy will live on in their hearts and minds. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests considering a memorial contribution to the American Cancer Society or an arts organization of their choice.

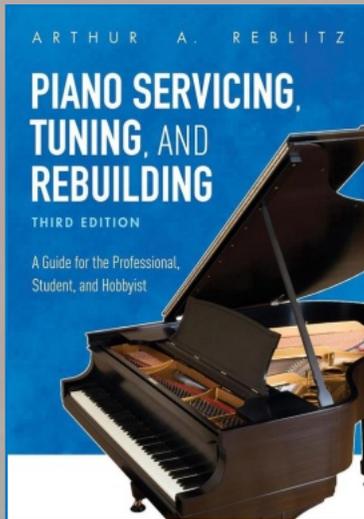


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www.ptgcolumbus.org

"That's it! We've peaked! It's all down hill from here..."



A couple of Chapter members and the Chapter website's Beat Generator page are mentioned in the latest (3rd) edition of "Piano Servicing, Tuning, and Rebuilding: A Guide for the Professional, Student, and Hobbyist" by Arthur Reblitz. On pages 196 and 197, the Beat Generator is mentioned in the footnotes in the section on learning to hear beat rates of various intervals, including the four contiguous pivotal thirds used in some temperament sequences. David Chadwick and Chris Burget are also mentioned in the Acknowledgements section on page xi.

Columbus Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

- Officers -

President	David Chadwick, RPT
Vice-President	Chris Purdy, RPT
Treasurer	Ron Kenreich
Secretary	Chris Burget
Imm. Past Pres.	Mitch Staples, RPT

Chapter Meeting

**To Be
Determined**

Disclaimer:

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